

The House of Representatives passed [The Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act \(SAFRA\)](#) , which provides the single largest investment in aid to help students and families afford college in history-all while saving taxpayers billions of dollars. In Connecticut's first district, 16,893 students will be eligible for a new, larger Pell Grant award in the 2010-2011 academic year.

The Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act will:

- Expand access to an affordable college education to more American students with \$40 billion investment in the Pell Grant program, keep interest rates affordable on need-based federal student loans and simplify the federal student aid application process

- Put our kids on the right educational path early on with an Early Learning Challenge Fund to increase high-quality early learning opportunities for low-income children.

- Invest an unprecedented \$10 billion to make our community colleges part of our economic recovery with training programs to help build a highly-skilled, innovative, 21st century workforce ready for the rigors of a global economy.

The Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act also includes legislation authored by Congressman Larson that would help transform our community college system into a job training hub for communities across the country.

[Congressman Larson's Community College Technology Access](#) provision will open the doors of community college computer labs and provide training opportunities to the public in order to provide workers an opportunity to refine or learn key computer skills. The technology training will strengthen skills necessary for our workers to be competitive in the job market.

President Obama has said, ["community colleges are an undervalued asset in our country. Not only is that not right, it's not smart."](#)

Community colleges reach every corner of this country with over 1100 campuses in urban, rural and suburban settings. They serve an invaluable role in cultivating our nation's workforce. According to the [American Association of Community Colleges](#), 59% of new nurses are educated and approximately 80% of firefighters, law enforcement officers, and EMTs are credentialed at our nation's community colleges.

Congressman Larson wrote the Community College Technology Access based on the writings of NDN's Dr. Robert J. Shapiro, the Chair of NDN's Globalization Initiative. NDN is a leading think tank and advocacy organization.

After bill passage, Dr. Shapiro said, ["I salute the House of Representatives and especially Chairman John Larson for passing legislation that taps the resources and technology of community colleges to provide America's workers with the information-technology skills they'll need to succeed in a very competitive U.S. and global marketplace, particularly during tough times."](#)